

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PA-02 INR-10 IO-14 AID-05

SS-15 NSC-05 HA-05 /079 W

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R 261135Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4475

INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY BANJUL

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

USICA WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 13693

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP, SOPN, IT

SUDJ: MISS LILLIAN VISIT -- MEDIA REACTION WRAP-UP

1. SUMMARY: MEDIA COVERAGE AND EDITORIAL COMMENTARY IN THE ITALIAN MEDIA WAS HEAVY AND SYMPATHETIC. MOST COVERAGE WAS FOCUSED ON MISS LILLIAN, HER AGE AND HER PERSONALITY, BUT VISIT ALSO SERVED TO CALL ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF WORLD HUNGER AND PRESIDENT CARTER'S PERSONAL INTEREST IN DEVELOPMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. "MISS LILLIAN--THE BIGGEST PERSONALITY IN THE CARTER FAMILY." THE ITALIAN PRESS ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM WAS OVERWHELMED BY THE PERSONALITY AND FRANKNESS OF THAT "SPIRITED, WITTY WOMAN." HER DESIRE TO "MEET WITH THE COMMON PEOPLE EVERYWHERE I GO" WAS ACCEPTED WITHOUT RESERVATION BY A USUALLY CYNICAL ITALIAN PRESS CORPS, AND THE SINCERITY OF HER STATEMENT THAT A MEETING WITH THE POPE PAUL VI "HAS BEEN THE DREAM OF MY LIFE," WHILE CONSIDERED BY ONE PAPER TO BE "CURIOUS FOR A FERVENT BAPTIST" WAS NEVER QUESTIONED. SAMPLE QUOTES:

3. IL RESTO DEL CARLINO: "IN HER FIRST FORMAL ENCOUNTER
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WITH JOURNALISTS SHE IMMEDIATELY SHOWED THE UNPREDICTABILITY AND SPIRIT WHICH HAS EARNED HER FAME IN THE U.S..."

4. LA STAMPA: "...LILLIAN CARTER, THE PERSONALITY, EXISTED WELL BEFORE HER SON BECAME PRESIDENT OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S TWO SUPERPOWERS. WHEN ASKED IF SHE WOULD BE DOING SUCH WORK IF HER SON WERE NOT PRESIDENT, MISS LILLIAN REPLIED: 'I HAVE BEEN

DING IT FOR TWENTY YEARS.' IN THAT CASE, ASKED ANOTHER QUESTIONER, 'DO YOU THINK YOUR SON BENEFITTED FROM YOUR STRENGTH BEFORE BECOMING PRESIDENT?' HER ANSWER: 'HE WAS JUST RAISED RIGHT.'"

5. PAESE SERA: "A VISIT OUTSIDE NORMAL DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS WHICH DERIVES ITS IMPORTANCE FROM THE VITALITY OF LILLIAN CARTER AND FROM HER CONSTAN CIVIC AND NON-CONFORMIST INVOLVEMENT."

6. "MISS LILLIAN--A COMMITMENT TO THE WEAK AND UNDERPRIVILEGED." ALL MAJOR PAPERS, ITALIAN NATIONAL RADIO AND TELEVISION REPORTED LONG EXCERPTS FROM HER ARRIVAL STATEMENT CONCERNING PURPOSE OF THE TRIP, HER ACCEPTANCE SPEECH AT FAO AND HER TELEVISION INTERVIEW. SAMPLE QUOTED:

7. PAESE SERA: "MISS LILLIAN AND THE PRESIDENT TALKED AT LENGTH ABOUT CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE PROBLEMS OF HUNGER IN THE WORLD, THEMES AND TRAGEDIES TO WHICH LILLIAN CARTER HAS FOR TWENTY YEARS DEVOTED MUCH OF HER ENERGY...IN FACT, HER TRIP TO THE SAHEL IS PART OF HER PROGRAM TO FIGHT WORLD HUNGER."

8. IL TEMPO: "MAMMA CARTER WILL BE HER SON'S MESSENGER--SHE IS GOING TO THE SAHEL TO EXPLAIN THAT THE PRESIDENT IS DEEPLY INTERESTED IN THE PROBLEMS OF WORLD HUNGER, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPMENTPROCESS..."

9. IL TEMPO: "A MOVING SPEECH AT FAO; A PEACEFUL REVOLUTION
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AGAINST WORLD HUNGER."

10. ANSA (ITALIAN NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY): "HER TRIP WAS UNDERTAKEN TO CALL TO HE ATTENTION OF THE PEOPLE OF HER COUNTRY THE PROBLEMS OF HUNGER IN THE WORLD, THE GROWING DISPARITY BETWEEN RICH AND POOR NATIONS, PEACE AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN THIRD WORLD SOCIETIES."

11. LA VOCE REPUBBLICANA: "...A MISSION WHICH WELL BECOMES THE CHARACTER AND THE BACKGROUND OF THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT'S EMISSARY BECAUSE OF HER CONSTANT INVOLVEMENT WITH LESS FORTUNATE PEOPLE AND HER CONCRETE EXPERIENCES AS A NURSE IN INDIA."

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12. "MISS LILLIAN--I LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING YOUR YOUNG
PRESIDENT." ENTIRE NATIONAL PRESS SEEMED PLEASED WITH ENCOUNTER
BETWEEN MISS LILLIAN AND ITALIA PRESIDENT SANDRO PERTINI.
SAMPLE QUOTES:

13. CORRIERE DELLA SERA: "LILLIAN CARTER SUCCEEDED IN
ESTABLISHING AN ATMOSPHERE OF SYMPATHY. IN TWENTY MINUTES
OF CONVERSATION WITH THE PRESIDENT SHE CREATED AN ATMOSPHERE
OF GREAT CORDIALITY."

14. IL GIORNO: "CONVERSATION WITHOUT PROTOCOL BETWEEN
MAMMA CARTER AND PERTINI."

15. COMMENT: PUBLIC AFFAIRS ASPECT OF VISIT WAS SUCCESS.
MISS LILLIAN'S SPIRIT AND CANDOR ASSURED THAT FIRST MEETING
OF U.S. REPRESENTATIVE WITH
ITALY'S NEW PRESIDENT SANDRO PERTINI WAS SEEN BY ITALIAN
PRESS AND ITALIAN PEOPLE AS WARM AND FRIENDLY, AND HER PRESENCE
FOCUSED PRESS AND PUBLIC ATTENTION ON PROBLEMS OF HUNGER AND
DEVELOPMENT FOR FOUR DAYS.GARDNER
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